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MEMORANDUM

Date: July 28, 2006

To: Parks and Recreation Department Commissioners

From: William C. Scalzo, Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "WCS", is written over the "From:" line.

Re: **Director's Summary of Current Events**

Listed below are issues that the department has been involved with since the July 11, 2006 Director's Summary.

Superintendent Report

McDowell Mountain Regional Park: The Park received notification that the Nova National Desert Classic Mountain Bike Race will be the first race of the 2007 National Off-Road Bicycle Association national championship series. The race is scheduled for March 29th – April 1st.

The Arizona Park and Recreation Association informed Park Supervisor Rand Hubbell that the Mountain Bike by the Moon Light series of night mountain bike rides had been selected as the Best Sports Program and will receive an award at the Annual APRA Conference at the end of August.

The Park will host a hike lead by Pinau Merlin an author and expert on "Desert Holes." The hike will be one of over 70 events which will compose Culturefest an event being coordinated and sponsored by *Smithsonian Magazine*. The event at McDowell is scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on November 3rd. Participation is limited but invitations will be sent to all Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Commissioners in the late summer.

Usery Mountain Regional Park: Day-use has increased in July for 2006 over 2005 and camping has been very slow this summer compared to last year. Annual pass sales continue to grow in the new fiscal year.

The Fourth of July holiday was busy with early morning hikers on the Wind Cave Trail and on the Merkle Trail. The archery range is seeing the usual seasonal increase of archers tuning and honing up their arrows for hunting season.

Interpretive Ranger, Amy Roberts is continuing on with summer programming while being very heat-conscious with our visitors. The ranger is even having monsoon programs this summer: Visitors bring their own squirt guns for "Make Your Own Monsoon". We have been posting signs at the trailheads warning trail users about the days with excessive heat warnings and that we do not recommend hiking after a certain time of day.

Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area: Interpretive Ranger; Kevin Smith has been receiving press coverage for his "tasting the desert" interpretive hikes, these hikes are very popular with the public.

Interpretive Ranger; Shelly Rasmussen has completed documenting an oral history with an elderly lady in Wickenburg who spent part of her childhood living on a ranch in the NE corner of Spur Cross. This has been a fruitful pursuit and has given us a richer understanding of life in the early years of Spur Cross.

Lake Pleasant Regional Park: The Life Jacket Loaner Pilot Program was on July 1, 2006, 10:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. The pilot loaner program that promoted the importance of wearing life jackets when swimming, boating and fishing was very successful. A reporter covered the story and placed it in the July 7th issue of Peoria Today.

The Pack It In-Pack It Out Program was on July 1, 2006 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM, it was intended to reduce the amount of litter left by visitors during the July 4th holiday weekend. Flyers were posted at both entry stations and in kiosks throughout the Park. The Park staff will continue to coordinate various clean- up projects as well as launch new programs to ensure the protection of our natural resources.

Natural Resources Program brochure has been rewritten for clarity and is now formatted to County graphics standards. It has been approved by Park Supervisor and Department PIO. Arizona Clean and Beautiful was contacted for guidance through this program's launch. They offered their support as sponsors to help us launch and maintain the program and will donate 1000 trash bags from Glad, and water and Propel fitness water from Coca Cola for volunteers to use at the National Public Lands Clean Up on September 30th. They will be advertising for volunteers for this program on the AZ Clean and Beautiful website.

Channel 3 broadcasted the morning weather from Lake Pleasant, highlighting various activities at the Park during the holiday weekend, including the Life Jacket Awareness and Pack it in-Pack it Out programs. Signs for the life jacket program (Wear It) were translated into Spanish and placed at both entry stations. The Pack It In/Out flyer was also recently translated into Spanish and will be posted at the entry stations and in kiosks throughout the park.

A partnership grant from the Arizona Lottery is being sought to sponsor trash-bags to be available to visitors at various locations throughout the park. When the requirements are met, the grant will be evaluated.

The Maricopa County VolunteerMatch Program is being sought to advertise the park's need for volunteers.

Flyers and posters advertising National Public Lands Day have been delivered as well as other items to advertise the Park's involvement and need for volunteers. The flyers and posters will be distributed to kiosks, entry stations, and the Visitor's Center.

Dam Good Run and the Natural Resources Program were advertised in a local publication. The Natural Resources Program was introduced to the department as a feature in the *Desert Reflections Newsletter*.

White Tank Mountain Regional Park: White Tank staff members continue to monitor and repair 7.25 miles of new 4 strand barb wire fence on the north park boundary. Old bad habits die hard, however great strides are being made toward the protection of the habitat and park property.

The fire ban seems to have been communicated well in the media and with signs all over the park. So far this year people are respecting the signs and issuance of the ban.

Local news papers are picking up on some of our interpretive hikes in the shade of the mountain. Some papers have also reported programming directing people to view wildlife and deer drinking at watering stations in the park in the early evening.

The White Tank Park staff is looking forward to a new visitor center. Blue staking has taken place for the new contact station. Lane modifications and a cement pad will be coming soon for the new station

Ramada Picnic areas are getting facelifts as well as the reservation sign kiosks. New group picnic grills have arrived and will be installed near the Area #4 Group Picnic Ramadas in the near future.

Positive progress is being made during the Park's summer marketing push. Several area hotels, community centers and chambers of commerce have received maps, brochures and information about the park.

Maricopa Trail

Dave Wilson/Environmental Planning Group has completed the fee proposal for the trail design for Segment 10, Cave Creek, Spur Cross and the trail design manual.

Jim Sweeney/Maricopa Water District has outlined their terms for the proposed license agreement allowing the Trail to cross the Beardsley Canal utility bridge south of the Lake Pleasant Dam.

Josiah Roberts/URS provided final Trail culvert alternatives for the proposed SR 303L Estrella Freeway.

Paul Bolster/PB provided a progress update to the ADOT Happy Valley Road to I-17 Utility interface.

Colin Phipps/Anthem has completed the trailhead construction documents and is waiting on Corps of Engineers review of the trail alignment in Skunk Creek to proceed; with input from Darren Gerard/Planning and Development, a letter was sent to Pulte requesting an updated schedule and methods of construction.

Mike Rigney/Desert Foothills Land Trust has included the Trail alignment in their Natural Resources Initiative for existing and proposed trails.

Dennis Holcomb/FCD has updated the Parks IGA request with a pledge to provide a draft by August 2006.

Kent Taylor/Pinal County requested and received development information on land adjacent to San Tan Park.

Dennis Cournoyer/Aztec requested and received Avenida del Yaqui and Guadalupe roadway standards via ADOT and MCDOT and request for information responses.

Jerod Rodgers/COP is researching the Pima Canyon road right-of-way versus the 25 foot Sun Circle Trail easement; Phil Brandis/Pointe is obtaining property boundary drawings to confirm the location of the Sun Circle Trail.

Kristen Mohamed sent IGA drafts to the City of Phoenix, the City of Peoria and the Town of Cave Creek.

Scott Estergard/Rio Salado Oeste (U.S Army Corps of Engineers and the City of Phoenix) was requested to include the Trail as a stakeholder (19th to 83rd Avenue).

Valerie Swick and Chuck Williams/FCD are preparing preferred alternatives for their southwest valley locations.

Mark Gavin/Metro ADMP provided the current analysis for their flood control efforts.

TRK Architects consulting contract for the Visitor Center and Amphitheater projects has been approved by the BOS; TRK conducted a design workshop with the Parks staff.

Contract Update

Lake Pleasant Regional Park: The Environmental Assessment for the marina has been finalized and released. This is a critical document needed to allow the permit process to go forward. Plans are being submitted to respective agencies for approval. A cooperative effort exists between County and the City of Peoria in regards to codes, the permitting process and emergency services.

The Pensus litigation continues – appeal comments are due the Court the first week of August, 2006

Adobe Dam Regional Park: The Settlement Agreement was approved by the Board of Supervisors regarding Waterworld Safari, d.b.a. Kenney Enterprises, on July 26, 2006. As part of the settlement, the termination date of their existing Agreement is October 1, 2008 (in lieu of January 1, 2009); equipment and facilities will be appraised (original due date was July 24, 2006; however, no bids were received so Proposal will be extended) as to Fair Market Value (Agreement states Waterworld will be paid 75% of Fair Market Value if not selected as new concessionaire); and new

Request for Proposal is being drafted for release late 2006-early 2007 to enter into a new Use Management Agreement. Payment of the appraised Fair Market Value will be a requirement of the new Concessionaire.

The Board of Supervisors approved the amendment to the existing Agreement with Sahuaro Central. As a result of the amendment, Parks acquired approximately 16 acres of property fronting Pinnacle Peak Road which is now available for additional concessionaires and is included in the Request for Proposal to be released mid-August. There is approximately 800 acres that are available for recreational development as part of the Proposal. In exchange for the returned acreage to Parks, their existing Use Management Agreement was extended until 2029. However, starting February 2014, Sahuaro Central will be charged an Administrative Fee similar to other non-profit concessionaires located at Adobe Dam.

As part of Parks' Process Improvement Program, a meeting is being held mid-August to discuss recent changes, new partners and future changes to Adobe Dam Regional Park.

Estrella Mountain Regional Park: A formal proposal was submitted to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for a horseback riding concession. Final determination has not been made.

Discussions are on-going with the current concessionaire of Estrella Mountain Golf Course, developers of King Ranch and Supervisor Wilcox. The intent is to submit a formal proposal to (BLM) for expansion of another 18-holes; develop a "Golf School"; and creation of a "recreational community" as part of a joint-partnership.

Discussions continue with Sprint for construction of a possible cell tower which, upon completion, will mean additional revenue. Delays are currently the result of legal review by their attorneys. Once approved, Sprint will be able to access the land for preliminary suitability surveys. If the property is accepted, a formal Agreement will be entered into between Parks and Sprint.

Usery Regional Park: Discussions continue with Verizon for construction of a possible cell tower which, upon completion, will mean additional revenue. Delays are currently the result of legal review by their attorneys. Once approved, Verizon will be able to access the land for preliminary suitability surveys. If the property is accepted, a formal Agreement will be entered into between Parks and Verizon.

Grant Updates

White Tank Regional Par: National Trails Day was held last month which is a portion of the Waterfall Trail Reconstruction and Petroglyph Protection project. 45 trash bags were furnished to 100 people for the cleanup of Waterfall Trail, Black Rock Loop, Waddell and Competitive Track. Interpretive Ranger Mark Lansing stated that they were not able to fill all the bags which confirm their continued cleaning process and Adopt-A-Trail program.

McDowell Mountain Regional Park: Cultural Resource Survey on the Pemberton Ranch has been completed by Northland Archaeology Firm for the fiberglass water trough project for wildlife use. Eagle Scouts will be selected to work on the project.

San Tan Mountain Regional Park: Fencing project is 100% complete on the North Finger section. On the South Finger section, MCDOT has completed the Cultural Resource Survey, vegetation has been trimmed and stress posts have been laid.

Construction/Design Projects

FY06 Projects:

Estrella Mountain Regional Park Irrigation System Improvements: The construction contract was awarded to Grounds Control, Inc. and they have started work.

Restroom Improvements – Phase 1: The restrooms at McDowell and Usery are complete.

Entry Station Improvements – Phase 2: The construction contract was awarded to Niche Contractors, Inc. and they will begin work in August.

Usery Mountain Regional Park Water System Improvements: The pre-bid conference was held on July 27th and the project was bid on August 10th.

FY07 Projects:

Visitor Centers and Amphitheaters: A design charrette was conducted on July 18th at the Park Headquarters. Several field staff members attended.

System Wide Master Plan: A scope of work was revised and is being submitted to the Park Commission at the August meeting for their review and comments. An estimated completion date is August 2007.

Estrella Campground Design Update: Negotiations are proceeding with Stantec and a contract is anticipated to be executed in early August. Construction is anticipated next fiscal year if funds are approved.

Playground Shade Structures: Negotiations are proceeding with Shade Net through a Mohave Educational Services Cooperative contract. The Mohave contract is planned to be approved July 26th by the Board of Supervisors. Fifteen playgrounds throughout the park system are planned for shade structures.

Restroom Improvements - Phase 3: Negotiations are proceeding with ART and a contract is anticipated to be executed in early August. McDowell will receive two new family campground restrooms and Usery will receive two new group campground restrooms. All existing four structures will be demolished and built new.

Vulture Mountain: Discussions are proceeding with the US Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Parks has allocated \$100,000 to assist BLM with environmental studies.

Coming and Going in Human Resources

The department is still losing a lot of people to other agencies and other County departments. Ken Ludeman, Maintenance Worker at San Tan, Beth Seay, Accountant, at headquarters and Ray Martin, Maintenance Worker at Usery left us recently. We have several vacancies which include; Contact Station Assistant (temporary) at Lake Pleasant, Park Maintenance Worker (Lake Pleasant), Park Maintenance Worker (San Tan), Trails Technician (Trails Crew), Park Supervisor (Estrella), Park Supervisor (San Tan), Park Supervisor (Cave Creek), Interpretive Ranger (DOC).

The following was hired at Parks: John Fenton was hired as the new Contact Station Assistant (T) at Lake Pleasant

We are also very saddened by the passing of Robert Gaulden, Park Supervisor. Bob started with the department in April 2000 as an interpretive ranger at Estrella and was currently the Supervisor at Cave Creek Regional Park. The family has asked for their privacy during this time and plan to have some type of memorial service at the park in the spring.